These closets are built into the wall clear of the ground and the seat is at a lower level than usual. The low level is considered to have certain physiological advantages and it certainly offers a more natural position than the ordinary 17½-inch high seat. The safe beneath, in place of lead or the usual more or less absorbent tile, is a heavy cast-iron tray, coated with porcelain enamel and provided with a grating and waste pipe. The lead service and the anti-syphonage pipes to the closet are connected with adjustable gun-metal fittings. The flushing supply cisterns are of cast-iron, somewhat tapered at the bottom, which form, together with the use of a special valve, renders them as nearly as possible silent in action. The cisterns are also coated with white porcelain enamel, while the lever chains are of a non-corrosive metal with celluloid handles.

*Commode cupboards.*—One very important provision is that of the white porcelain cupboards for the storage of bedpans and urine bottles containing samples awaiting inspection. These are supplied with a novel system of ventilation, both inlet and exhaust. The fresh-air inlet, which is carried through the external wall, is fitted with a fine wire gauze moveable panel or fly trap. Thorough ventilation takes place each time the adjacent bedpan sink is used, some 200 or 300 cubic feet of air being drawn through the cupboards automatically. This is accomplished thus: the water-supply to the flushing cistern of the sink is utilised to operate a ventilating fan in its passage to charge the cistern. By this means any extra waste of water is avoided. Where these cupboards are not in the immediate vicinity of the bedpan sinks, shafts have been carried up from them fitted with copper exhaust ventilators which are kept in constant action by means of a small Bunsen burner fixed in the shaft.

*Scalding sinks.*—The bedpan sinks are of one piece of enamelled porcelain with ascending jets for scalding the pans and a special arrangement for urine bottles. The jets are controlled by self-closing non-concussive gun-metal valves. The basins or hoppers of these sinks are flushed by three-gallon cisterns similar to those used for the water closets. Porcelain corrugated slabs are supplied in connexion with these sinks, provided with hose and hand sprays, for scouring mackintosh sheets.

*Surgical sinks.*—The surgical sinks have naturally received most careful attention. The adoption of a toe action combined hot and cold valve would seem to be a considerable improvement on the pedal valves previously in use, as the slightest tap of the toe instantly controls both the quantity and the temperature of the flow, while there is no necessity for maintaining a regular pressure as with the pedal; necessarily, by doing away with the pedal, the fitting is rendered less complicated. The sinks themselves are of white porcelain with rolled edges and fitted with recessed accessible wastes, which last are removeable for sterilising. The sinks are in pairs and between each is fixed a polished gun-metal wringer for use when cleansing sponges, &c. The hot and cold supply is delivered through overhead swing brackets having a spray and douche attached. In connexion with these sinks are porcelain draining trays for cleaning instruments. Glass shelves for the disinfectant bottles are also provided which last have vulcanite valve stoppers.

*Lavatories.*—Adjoining the operating room is the surgeons' room in which are three large plain porcelain lavatories, each one being fitted in all respects like the surgical sinks, only the wastes are governed by a slide arrangement and can be opened or closed by a touch of the elbow, the wringers of course excepted. The whole of the metal used is non-corrosive. The baths, sinks, and other plumbers' work throughout the building are all of a proportionately high standard. The nurses' sinks are fitted with specially porcelain-enamelled Berkefeld filters. Water storage is provided for two days' supply and a small auxiliary electric motor has been fixed in order to insure their being charged in the event of the pressure failing in the water company's main.

Great credit is due to the architect, Sir William Emerson, and the hospital staff for the foresight and care shown in the details, as also to Messrs. Davis and Bennett, the contractors who have carried out the work. It may be added that only registered plumbers have been employed.

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TORBAY HOSPITAL, TORQUAY.—£1800 have been received by the governors of the Torbay Hospital, Torquay, in response to their appeal for £2000 for the purpose of providing a children's ward and a new operating theatre.

# SMALL-POX AND SLUMS AT PITTSBURG AND ALLEGHENY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL SANITARY COMMISSIONER.)

IN visiting what I was informed were considered to be the slums of Boston I only found one small group of houses which were inhabited by organ-grinders and which might be qualified as really bad. At Pittsburg and Allegheny there was no difficulty in discovering slums well worthy of comparison with the lowest quarters of large English industrial centres. The towns which have developed very rapidly in consequence of some newly created industry do not seem to be administered so well as the more ancient and historic towns and cities where the growth in size and trade has been more slow and more deliberate. Then there is one marked difference. In the older towns or cities the great difficulty is to find land to build upon; in the newer towns the difficulty is to find land that has been built upon. At Pittsburg there are vast stretches of elevated land outside the city where a large district of villadom is fast springing into existence. The result is that whole streets of more closely packed houses built near the centre of the city, which served as residences for the well-to-do before electric trams came into existence, are now handed over to the poorer sections of the community. These in some instances have degenerated into slums. Of course, the land in the business centre of the city has become extremely valuable and there the houses consist of offices with but very few inhabitants. Indeed, to make still more use of the land "skyscrapers" have been built, one of these being no less than 28 storeys high. It is to be hoped that measures will be taken here as at Boston to limit this style of building, for though a "skyscraper" or two may not do much harm, except it be by reason of its ugliness, a large number would so shut out the air and light from the streets as to constitute a considerable danger to the public health. What the town may become may be inferred by the bargain made by one of the churches. The length of this church ran parallel with the street and thus it occupied a good deal of frontage. The church thereupon sold half this frontage to a "skyscraper" building company. Besides paying a considerable sum of money, this company pulled down the church at its own expense and then rebuilt it the other way round—namely, at right angles with the street instead of parallel. Thus, only the narrow end of the church faces the street, and on the frontage space vacated a huge "skyscraper," containing many hundred offices and business premises, towers above the church and its steeple. Instead of driving the money-changers out of the temple the land on which the temple stood has been sold to the money-changers.

It has already been explained that in spite of the immense wealth accumulated at Pittsburg there is no proper water-supply and typhoid fever prevails in an endemic condition which occasionally bursts out into an epidemic.[1] An administration which is content to serve out sewage-contaminated water to the entire city is not likely to bestow particular care on the housing of the poor or the disposal of its sewage. There is no sewage-disposal scheme before the municipal authorities that is in the least likely to save the city. A plan for filtering the sewage-contaminated water now drunk is before the authorities. The cost of the filters is to be met by introducing meters and making a charge in proportion to the quantity consumed, a method which will not encourage poor people to take baths. But there are legal difficulties in the way of this scheme that could well supply pretexts for indefinite postponement. Yet there have been many warnings as to the general insanitary condition of Pittsburg. As soon as the temperature rises to about 80° F. there is an abnormal prevalence of infantile diarrhœa. The sanitary department does a good deal of work in endeavouring to cope with existing evils. On the receipt of a message from a medical practitioner municipal inspectors examine the plumbing, the drains, and the water-supply of any house which is considered to be in an insalubrious condition. It often happens that the inhabitants are found to be drinking contaminated water from a private well and they are then given the contaminated public water-supply by way of

[1] See Typhoid Fever and the Water-supply at Washington, Pittsburg, and Allegheny, THE LANCET, Nov. 19th, 1904, p. 1451.